



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: September 12, 2022

TITLE: Council Delegation - Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Signage for Major Development Projects

DIVISION: City Manager's Office

SUMMARY:

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) approved a motion to submit a recommendation to City Council to amend the Land Use Bylaw to allow freestanding billboard-scale signage for major development projects in Spruce Grove.

PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT a review be undertaken by Administration of the signage allowed for high visibility major developments under the Land Use Bylaw with a view to permitting freestanding billboard-scale signage at major development sites and that Administration report back to Council with recommendations by October 24, 2022.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

At the Special Meeting of the EDAC on August 4, 2022 a motion was brought forward concerning the lack of adequate signage for major development projects in Spruce Grove. Under the City's Land Use Bylaw, there is very limited ability to showcase these projects and the EDAC believes this works to the detriment of the community and fails to take advantage of an important economic development tool. Several examples include Easton, the Ballpark, Creekside Commons, Westwind, City Centre, and the Civic Centre - all high visibility locations.

This is not intended to generate a proliferation of signs across the community - just to create the profile needed for projects that have broad impact on the community. This would allow freestanding billboard signage for these projects. There would need to be some criteria developed to define "major development projects" and type of signage.

The benefits cited by the Committee include:

- Informs the public on what is happening at the site.
- Helps the developer in marketing the development.
- Helps the City in more rapidly building out the tax assessment base and employment.

The EDAC approved a motion “THAT a recommendation be made to City Council for an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to allow high visibility signage for major development projects.”

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

The issue could be deferred to a wider review of signage regulations under the Land Use Bylaw. This could consider other ways to address this type of signage such as requiring a certain level of signage for different types of development rather than making it the developer’s choice. The EDAC members did express concern that this may get lost in lengthy studies.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

This recommendation is being brought forward by the EDAC which is made up by a broad cross-section of the business and development community in Spruce Grove.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

Developers and the public would be consulted during the bylaw review process.

IMPACTS:

The signage cost would be the responsibility of the developer who would still be required to obtain a permit and meet City standards as set out in an amended bylaw. Other options could potentially have signage requirements built into permit/approval processes without necessarily needing separate permits.

This type of signage is commonplace in other municipalities as it informs residents of what is happening on the site and allows developers to market their project to potential tenants and investors.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Minimal implications due to the cost of signage.